

in the big city, you are going to make that much money. That is a good salary, and I believe these nurses deserve it.

But then you say, well, we need more nurses. We need to have more nurse training. Well, what do you need for nurse training? A teacher. A professor.

How do you take a registered nurse and turn that registered nurse into a professor? Two years for a master's degree in nursing.

The obvious question: What is that nurse going to do for 2 years while she is going to school or he is going to school to become a professor? They are not going to get the six-figure salary that they were earning as RNs. So there is an obvious economic disincentive for them to go into teaching even if they want to do it.

Now, let's assume they get through the 2 years and the master's degree, and now they are professors. The amount that they are being paid at the community college or at the nursing school is not comparable to the salary of an RN. So the economics of the situation come in as a great obstacle.

So what happens—you know this, I am sure, very well, Madam President. What happens to the hospital that doesn't have enough nurses? They have to go out for what they call contract nurses. I am not holding anything against these people. They make a living and are pretty smart at it. They make themselves available. Some of them move all over the country to be in different hospitals, and they get paid dramatically more than the RNs who are on the regular staff.

One hospital told me they pay three times the rate for a contract nurse as a regular nurse. Another said five times the rate. If you can think what that means, the budgets of these hospitals and clinics are going through the roof with these additional costs for a nursing shortage.

So we have got to find a way to create the economics of more nursing professors from the RN pool that is overtaxed, working hard, getting paid six figures, and move them into teaching ranks.

The obvious beneficiaries are all of us in America, but directly it is hospitals and clinics. So they have to join with us in a joint effort to try to solve this problem.

We also know that trauma is the root of much of the pain and conflict in our neighborhoods. You have heard the phrase: "Hurt people hurt people."

Almost 30 years ago, the CDC did a study on adverse childhood experiences, called ACEs. They found that witnessing violence or growing up without a stable home can really have an impact on the human mind, the mind of a child. Without the right help, that trauma can rewire a child's brain and change the way they see the world. It is not hard to see how this fuels the cycle of violence.

Under the HEAL Initiative, these 10 Chicago hospitals are bringing their

medical expertise into the community to help children cope with traumatic experiences. I have seen it in a classroom, in one of the classrooms called Calm Classrooms Project, which teaches meditation in school.

I was at a classroom of third graders, and the teacher said to the kids at their desks: Now we are going to be quiet for 5 minutes. So everybody just think about what we are going to do today.

There was one kid who just couldn't do it. He was fidgeting. He wanted to talk. She was telling him: No, no. Be quiet for a little while.

I said to the teacher afterwards: What is going on?

She said: That little boy is going through some real problems at home.

I said: What are you going to do about it?

She said: Senator, I am a teacher. I am not a psychologist. I am not a counselor. We need somebody to sit down and talk to him. He needs help right now.

Well, imagine all these kids coming back from their Zoom educations, trying to get back into the classroom and into the swing of things. For a lot of kids, there is an adjustment. They need a helping hand.

So what we are trying to teach is that what is going on with mental health issues, wellness issues, trauma issues all relates to the outcomes we are looking for: kids who are successful in school and kids who avoid the gangs and violence on the street.

Two weeks ago, I visited Drake Elementary School—the Drake Dragons—where I toured one of the school clinics and the mobile health van. Listen to this, Madam President. You are going to like this. They have a clinic in the school itself. They treat the kids with counseling and physical and health—whatever needs they have. They, of course, are there for the staff, but they also make it open to the families of the kids, no questions asked: Come on down to our clinic. When you drop your kid off at school, come on into the clinic if you need a helping hand. And they have expanded that to the neighborhood as well. It is a great idea, and it is based in the school—what I like about it.

It has been years and years since I was there, in grade school. We had an occasional school nurse, but that was about it. What would you think about a real clinic in the school? And over half of the people who come in need mental health counseling. It is an important part of life, and they are responding to it.

We were joined in our meeting just a week or so ago by Dr. Walensky from the CDC. She applauded these hospitals that are part of the Chicago HEAL Initiative, and she said this innovative partnership is exactly what CDC sees in the future.

I hope President Biden agrees. I am sure he will. In his fiscal year 2023 budget, the President called for a \$250

million investment in community violence interventions to support programs like the HEAL Initiative. Believe me, I am going to knock on his door. In March, in his State of the Union Address, the President urged lawmakers to come on a bipartisan basis to address mental health.

DEBBIE STABENOW, our colleague from Michigan, has been one of the strongest proponents of mental health. She was talking about this—and should. The President hears the message, and he is delivering.

I partnered also with Senator CAPITO, a Republican from West Virginia, on the RISE from Trauma Act, which will help more kids heal from trauma. Our bill would increase the resources for a trauma-informed workforce. Projects like HEAL and this legislation with Senator CAPITO can really change lives for the better.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, let me say a word about gun violence because in the city of Chicago, which I am honored to represent, it breaks my heart what is happening in that city.

Not last weekend but the weekend before, there were 37 shootings in the course of a weekend. Seven people died. This weekend, 9 people were killed and 26 others wounded by gunfire. This is the beginning of the summer months. I am afraid that it tells us we still have a massive challenge ahead of us. We have to do more at every single level.

Let's start with what the HEAL Initiative is doing and bring some hope to the lives of folks, give them an opportunity for a decent-paying job, let them have an affordable place to live that is safe from gunshots and other threats to a family.

We have to work on this together to deal with the criminal justice system. We learned the hard way that simply putting tougher sentences down for something like crack cocaine is not necessarily the answer. In fact, it can backfire, as it did, we learned, over the last 20 years. We have to have sensible criminal sentencing guidelines that punish wrongdoing, of course; keep dangerous people off the street, of course; but give people a chance to rebuild their lives. Many of them will be able to do it. Let me also say that we have to have effective prosecution.

We lost one of our best Chicago policemen just last year. Her name was Ella French. Ella French was a lovely, young, respected police officer who was sitting in a car with her partner. A fellow came up with a gun, shot her in the back of the head—unfortunately, killed her—and then shot her partner in the head, too, and blinded him in one eye. His name is Officer Yanez. I met him at the South Side Irish Parade.

Well, the tribute to Ella French, who lost her life in the line of duty, was like something I have never seen before in Chicago. They went to a high school

in the southern part of the city and took the chapel and set it aside for visitors to come pay their respects. The Presiding Officer wouldn't believe the lines that went on for blocks, men and women in uniform and everybody else—myself, my wife, folks in the city—paying their respects to Ella French. She was an extraordinary person.

The gun that killed her was a straw purchase gun. What does that mean? Somebody went into a Federal gun dealer and said: I want to buy a gun. They looked and checked, and that person had no criminal record. The person bought the gun, turned around, went outside, and handed it to a convicted felon, who then turned around and killed this policewoman. That is a straw purchase.

Unfortunately, for too long, we have treated that as a bookkeeping crime, a misdemeanor, nothing serious. It is serious. Straw purchases are a way to avoid the prohibition under the law of a person with a criminal record buying a gun. We ought to treat it as a serious matter.

I have appealed to all the U.S. attorneys in my State, and I hope all Senators will talk to the U.S. attorneys across the Nation. Take straw purchasing seriously. This is not a bookkeeping error; this is a deadly crime that can kill innocent, good people like Ella French and maimed the officer who was with her. So we ought to take that seriously.

This weekend that I just referred to, the previous one, with 37 shootings, 1 of them was on Sunday night. Madam President, they went to the scene afterwards and found 68 cartridges—68. The people in the neighborhood said it sounded like a war zone. Two of the cartridges were from an AK-47, a military assault type rifle, which has no place anywhere except in the military or maybe some police application, but in this case, it was being used in a shootout between two people in cars.

I don't understand what happened next. They ended up finding one of the people who were involved in the shooting. He had a gun. He had a gun illegally. He doesn't have a firearm identification card, required under Illinois law. After taking a look at the facts of the situation, they plan on charging him with a misdemeanor. What is going on here? A misdemeanor for a shootout on the streets of Chicago with 68 cartridges on the ground afterwards?

Whether it is a straw purchase treated as a bookkeeping error or a shootout with an AK-47 treated as a misdemeanor, we have to send the word out that this is unacceptable—not just in Chicago but unacceptable across this country.

If you want to legally own a gun, store it properly, use it properly and legally, I am all for it, and I think that is what the Second Amendment is all about. But what is going on on streets of Chicago, the streets of East St. Louis, Rockford, and so many other

cities is a shootout with a massive amount of guns that are finding their way onto the streets. So we have to take that seriously.

CONFIRMATION OF LADON A. REYNOLDS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, let me just close by saying that last week, the Senate did a great job filling another critical law enforcement vacancy in Chicago. We confirmed Oak Park Police Chief LaDon Reynolds to be our Northern District's next U.S. marshal. That seat has been vacant for almost 4 years. It is a critical position for reducing crime, apprehending fugitives, and protecting our judges.

Marshal Reynolds is the man for the job. Breaking the cycle of violence in Chicago and across America requires the best. All of us need to pull together: families, schools, community organizations, law enforcement, the public health community, faith leaders, the business community, and more. I am glad that the HEAL Initiative is a start in that direction. We have more work to do, and we cannot allow any petty Washington politics to get in the way.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. DUCKWORTH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Joshua Frost, of New York, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, there has been a lot of noise about canceling student debt. That has been going on for quite a few months, but it seems to have taken on a new life here within the last week to 10 days. That whole talk is worse than closing the barn door after the horse has escaped; it is like buying a new horse but leaving the barn door open. If all student

debt was gone tomorrow, we would be right back where we started when this whole new crop of students graduate.

Last month, the administration unilaterally extended all the pause on paying back student loans for all borrowers until the end of August, regardless of need. It doesn't matter that all Americans are back to work now, if they want to be back to work. It doesn't matter if the borrower is making six figures and can afford to pay off their loans.

The latest extension will bring the cost of this student loan payment pause up to about \$150 billion. Just to put that \$150 billion in context, the entire Department of Education budget for this year is about half of that amount at \$80 billion.

Higher education advocates have been calling for the doubling of the Pell grant. That is the program that targets aid to those with the most financial need. It is a noble goal to double the Pell grant; but, of course, Congress needs to find the money somewhere to do just that.

Now, instead, the Biden administration is spending billions of dollars to allow high earners with graduate degrees to not pay their loans with no say from the Congress of the United States. And you know the President of the United States has been debating for months—maybe starting at the beginning of his term—did he really have the authority to do it. He has expressed the opinion, at least on the \$50,000 figure, that he didn't figure he had the authority to do it. I question whether he has that authority at all.

If you want to help those who owe more in student loans than they can afford to pay, we need to fix the student loan program on the front end. In other words, we need to change the incentives and give colleges a reason to bring down tuition. Right now, a high school student looking at college is often in the dark about what they will end up paying to attend college and to get that degree. It is no wonder that prices rise when students don't know even what those prices are. And students are encouraged, of course, to borrow the maximum even if they don't need that maximum, because that is what the Federal law requires.

So in response to this problem about a Federal policy encouraging students to go into more debt than they need to get their degree and also about the rising tuition costs because colleges think they can raise their tuition at will because the Federal Government is going to come in and help the student, I have introduced three bipartisan bills to give students the information they need to make the choice that works best for them. My bills would make it easier for students to see how much each college would cost, what aid they are going to be getting, and what their average salary versus student loan payments would be. The answer isn't to cancel student debt only after students have gotten in well over their heads, it